

TAX SEASON '98: ELECTRONIC ACTIVITY, CUSTOMER SERVICE

WASHINGTON -- According to the Internal Revenue Service, taxpayers have reaped the benefits of the two principal hallmarks of this year's very successful tax season: increases in electronic activity and improvements in customer service.

"This filing season shows that we are moving down the right path towards becoming more customer-oriented," said IRS Commissioner Charles O. Rossotti. "We will continue to use our technology and make the organizational changes needed to deliver the service our customers expect."

Electronic filing of tax returns -- by computer and by telephone -- surpassed IRS projections, increasing by more than 28 percent, to 24.2 million returns as of April 17. The IRS Web site had over 340 million hits from taxpayers seeking information, forms or publications -- almost triple last year's filing season activity. IRS TaxFax sent more than 750,000 faxes, an increase of more than 30 percent.

The IRS opened its telephone help lines 96 hours a week, resulting in 17 million fewer busy signals. More than 150 local IRS offices offered walk-in assistance on six Saturdays. A special Earned Income Tax Credit Awareness Day and two Problem Prevention Days helped taxpayers get the benefits they were entitled to while avoiding mistakes on their returns.

(more)

As of Apr. 17, the IRS had received more than 100 million tax returns and processed more than \$84 billion in refunds, with nearly \$32 billion of that amount deposited directly to taxpayers' bank accounts.

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1998 FILING SEASON STATISTICS

Cumulative through the week ending 4/18/97 and 4/17/98

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Individual Income Tax Returns (electronic and paper)			
Total Receipts	100,867,000	100,267,000	-0.6
Total Processed	68,411,000	71,906,000	5.1
E-filing -- Total Receipts:			
Standard E-file	14,242,000	18,307,000	28.5
TeleFile	4,677,000	5,933,000	26.9
Refunds Certified by the Martinsburg Computing Center:			
Number	60,380,000	62,531,000	3.6
Amount	\$78.221 billion	\$84.217 billion	7.7
Average Refund	\$1295	\$1347	4.0
Direct Deposit Refunds:			
Number	15,079,000	17,557,000	16.4
Amount	\$26.896 billion	\$31.849 billion	18.4